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PHASE 3 TRIAL ANALYSIS PEGS COVAXIN's EFFICACY AT 77.8%

Bharat Biotech said its jab has 77.8% effectiveness against symptomatic Covid and 65% efficacy against the Delta strain

93.4% EFFECTIVE AGAINST SEVERE DISEASE

While the study is yet to be peer-reviewed, the pre-print data publicised on Saturday show Covaxin to be 93.4% effective against severe disease. "Safety analysis shows adverse events reported were similar to placebo, with 12% subjects experiencing commonly known side-effects and less than 0.5% of subjects feeling serious adverse events," the company said

OVER 25K VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATED

- Though Bharat Biotech got emergency use authorisation in January last, there was criticism that its efficacy data was much delayed, while several other manufacturers had reported theirs
- The trials were conducted between November 16 and January 7, 2021, with 25,798 participants randomised to placebo groups | P9

79%
EFFICACY OF THE PHASE 3 RESULTS OF ASTRAZENECA (COVISHIELD)

Swearing-in today; Khatima MLA will become the third CM of the hill state in four months

Pushkar Dhami is new U'Khand CM

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Dehradun

PUTTING an end to the political drama, Pushkar Singh Dhami was named the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on Saturday. The decision to make the 45-year-old the No. 1 man in the state cabinet was taken at the BJP's legislature group meeting.

A two-time MLA from Khatima, Dhami is the youngest CM of Uttarakhand. He will take oath on Sunday. "I am grateful that the party has chosen a common worker, son of an ex-serviceman born in Pithoragarh to serve the state. We are committed to working for the people," he said.

His name was proposed by outgoing CM Tirath Singh Rawat, who resigned on Friday. After that, it was a unanimous choice. There were celebrations in the new CM's village, with locals dancing to the beat of *dholaks*.

Dhami started out as a youth leader and is believed to have a strong youth connect. In his younger days, he was a leader of ABVP, the student wing of RSS. Later, he became part of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, the youth wing of BJP. In all, he has served the RSS and its sister organisations for 33 years. Not known to be close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Dhami is believed to have good rapport with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Former Uttarakhand BJP president and MP from Nainital Ajay Bhatt said it felt good to have a young leader. "We are going to win the 2022 Assembly elections with a bigger margin than 2017," he said.

Dhami's mother Vishna Devi said: "I cannot describe my feelings. I miss his father. He would have been happier than me, the happiest person in the world to see his son become the CM." Dhami's wife Geeta thanked the prime minister, Shah, Rajnath, BJP's national president JP Nadda and the people of Khatima who elected him.

Opposition leaders lashed out at BJP, saying, "The drama is an insult to the people of the state. The PM promised that double engine governments will work towards development but all they gave was two ex-chief ministers."

P S Dhami waving to his supporters after being named U'Khand CM | PTI

INSIDE | FROM ARMY FAMILY, DHAMI HAS RSS ROOTS | P10 | RAWAT'S SHORT STINT MIRED IN CONTROVERSIES | P10

No more weekend curfew, malls to open from Monday

WHAT IS ALLOWED

Suspension of weekend curfew

100% staff at private/govt offices

Malls, shopping complexes

Restaurants, hotels, businesses till 9 pm

Places of worship for darshan

Weddings with 100 persons

Funerals with 20 persons

Swimming pools, stadiums for practice, training purposes

WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED

Theatres, cinema halls, pubs; Large gatherings of all kinds; Schools, colleges and educational institutions; All activities between 9 pm and 5 am (Night Curfew)

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

INTRODUCING further relaxations to existing lockdown norms in Karnataka, CM BS Yediyurappa on Saturday said that all government and private offices, industries and manufacturing units may resume work with 100 per cent staff starting Monday.

Relaxations will be in place for two weeks, till July 19. In a big relief to businesses, weekend curfew has been suspended. Though night curfew will continue, it will be in force between 9 pm and 5 am.

Shopping malls will be allowed to open, while public transport services, including buses and Metro, can run with 100 per cent seating capacity. The new relaxations will apply to all districts except Kodagu, where the Covid positivity rate continues to hover above 5 per cent.

"Theatres and cinema halls will remain shut. Swimming pools are allowed to be open only for training for competitions. Sports complexes and stadiums will open only for practice. All large gathering will remain prohibited, but for personal functions, like weddings etc, a cap of 100 people has been set. Not more than 20 people will be allowed to attend funerals, adding, "Places of worship will open only for 'darshana', and not 'sevas'," Yediyurappa said.

Staffers in PPE suits sanitise the premises of a popular mall in Bengaluru on Saturday, in preparation for the shopping centres opening on Monday | PTI

Curbs can be lifted when cases dip: Kang

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

LIFTING Covid-related curbs when cases are down and reintroducing them whenever the indicators are high should be the strategy states should adapt, says Dr Gagandeep Kang, renowned virologist at CMC Vellore and Karnataka's advisor for vaccination protocols, in an exclusive interview to *TNSE*.

"With restrictions gone, there will be surge in cases. We need to adapt strategies of Maharashtra. Keep note of surge indicators, not just in terms of cases, but also ICU admissions and mortalities, and reintroduce restrictions," says Dr Kang.

Regretting that India is wasting valuable data by not integrating software, she says, "Whenever there is a new virus, we have to come up with new vaccines. For this, we need data. Why can't our database software talk to each other?" P4

Writ petition doesn't stand: Twitter to HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

TWITTER told the Delhi High Court on Saturday the writ petition against it for flouting the IT Rules 2021 is not maintainable because it is a US-registered entity which is neither the originator nor the publisher of the content transmitted through its platform. The petitioner doesn't have *locus standi* and, hence, the petition should be dismissed, it argued. The plea had also sought action against Twitter Inc for its failure to appoint a Resident Grievance Officer as directed under Rule 4 of the IT Rules 2021 and stated that as per a Government of India circular, the same were to be complied with by May 25. Replying, Twitter submitted that the circular was merely directory and not mandatory in nature, and further subject to "just exceptions". P9

France begins judicial investigation into corruption claims in Rafale deal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

FRANCE'S Parquet National Financier (PNF, national financial prosecutor's office) has ordered a judicial probe into allegations of corruption and favouritism in the ₹59,000 crore Rafale fighter jet deal with India, French media reported. PNF, which initially refused to order an inquiry into the controversial defence deal, finally relented after French investigative website Mediapart's fresh reports about alleged wrongdoings and a complaint by French NGO Sherpa, which specialises in financial crimes.

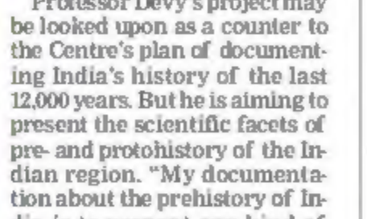
In April, a Mediapart report claimed "millions of euros of hidden commissions" were paid to ensure the deal is sealed, of which "some could have been given as bribes" to Indian officials.

Following this, NGO Sherpa filed an official complaint for "corruption" and "influence peddling" among other accusations, prompting an investigating magistrate to be designated to probe the deal.

"The highly sensitive probe into the inter-governmental deal signed off in 2016 was formally opened on June 14," Mediapart reported.

Rafale maker Dassault Aviation has time and again averred that there has been no wrong-doing.

Sherpa said its first complaint was filed with PNF in October 2018 but the latter took no action. The NGO said its complaint was based on a petition filed by former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie and lawyer Prashant Bhushan with the Central Bureau of Investigation. In the complaint, Sherpa had denounced the fact that Dassault chose a leading Indian conglomerate with no experience in aeronautics, as its Indian partner instead of HAL.



No myths in Devy's book on 6,000-year history of India

AMIT S UPADHYE @ Hubballi

AROUND six millennia ago, some clans of forest dwellers from South India set out on an epic journey, travelling along the coast and through northern parts of India to reach Gandhara, or Kandahar of present day Afghanistan.

The movement of people at a time when even the wheel was not invented has been documented in a 1,500-page tome, India Before History, by well-known linguistic anthropologist and Padma award winner **Ganesh N Devy**. The book, which documents the prehistoric period, will also have nearly 70 articles from the country's eminent scholars.

Professor Devy's project may be looked upon as a counter to the Centre's plan of documenting India's history of the last 12,000 years. But he is aiming to present the scientific facets of pre- and protohistory of the Indian region. "My documentation about the prehistory of India is to prevent any kind of falsification about our past. The government-formed committee to study the history of India has already run into controversy due the choice of members. The initial opposition was that it had no women members and a lone scholar from South India," Prof Devy explains. P2

Severe third wave unlikely: IIT researchers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE impact of a third Covid wave, if it comes, will be much less severe than the second, according to a mathematical model developed by IIT Kanpur and IIT Hyderabad. In the worst-case scenario, there could be up to 2 lakh new cases daily between October and November if 50% of the infected individuals lose their immunity within three months and the rest stay immune. Other assumptions are that 25% will gain immunity one month after first vaccine dose, and another 25% one month after the second. Also, a new mutant virus may arrive by August-end and raise the contact rate to 0.5%. In a better scenario, there could be 75,000 daily cases, the model showed.

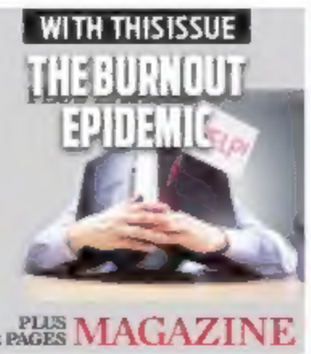
EXPRESS READ

BSY writes to TN CM on Mekedatu project

Bengaluru: Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has written to his Tamil Nadu counterpart MK Stalin requesting him not to oppose the Mekedatu balancing reservoir-cum-drinking water project and offered a bilateral meeting to clear apprehensions | P7

Former CS-headed panel sends first report to govt

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-2, headed by former Chief Secretary TM Vijaya Bhaskar, on Saturday submitted its first report to the government, with 856 recommendations with focus on citizen-centric services | P5



DAY-OLD BABY GIRL FOUND HANGED IN GOVT HOSP

V VELAYUDHAM @ Chikkaballapur

IN a heart-wrenching incident, a one-day-old baby girl was found hanged to death at Chinthamani Government Hospital in Chikkaballapur district on Saturday.

The baby, strung with a rope from a toilet window grill, was found by a Group D employee of the hospital, Venkateshappa, who informed the doctors.

The hospital CCTV footage, which has been seized by the police, shows two women entering the toilet with the baby.

"The search is on for the duo. We are probing the crime from all angles," said Superintendent of Police GK Mithun Kumar.

Hospital Administrative Medical Officer Dr Santhosh said that the baby appeared to have been born at home and not at the hospital as its umbilical cord had not been cut. The 60-bed mother and child hospital, where the baby was found dead, had six deliveries on Friday, and all the mothers and babies have been accounted for. They are safe and healthy, he added.

Inspector General of Police (Central Range) M Chandra Shekar said that a murder case has been registered and a team has been formed under the direct supervision of SP Mithun Kumar to crack the case.

Deputy Commissioner R Latha said the District Health Officer and medical officers concerned have been instructed to submit a report immediately.

> **The baby appeared to have been born at home and not at the hospital as its umbilical cord had not been cut**
> – Dr Santhosh, Chinthamani Government Hospital Administrative Medical Officer

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